

APPENDIX B

Public Involvement

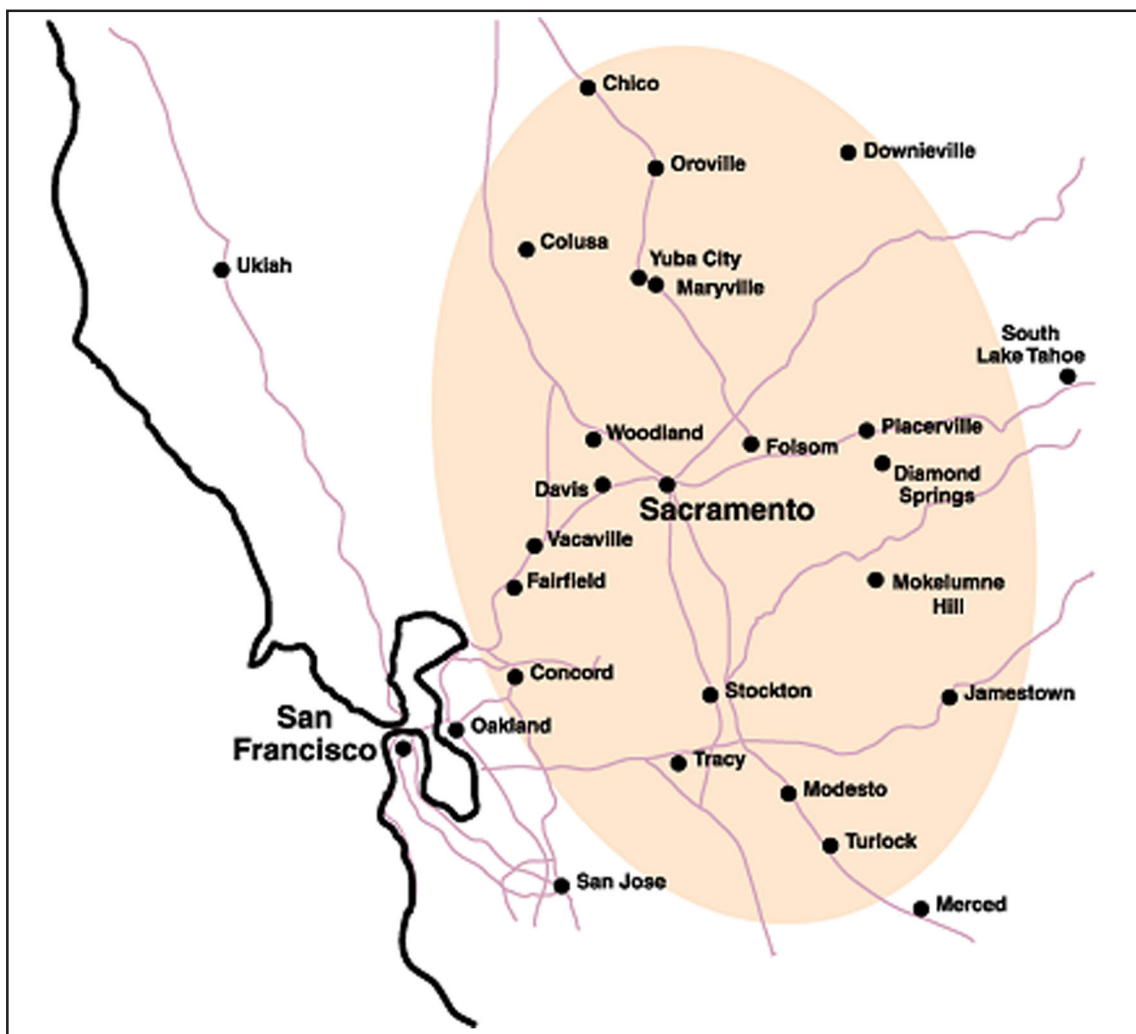
B.1 INTRODUCTION

B.1.1 PURPOSE AND GOALS

Western developed a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the Draft EIS to establish the foundation for identifying public issues, concerns, needs, and values. It is part of a collaborative, systematic decision-making process. The SVS PIP has been designed to adapt to the needs of the project throughout the development of the EIS. The population centers in the Region of Influence (ROI) range from a major metropolitan area to rural communities surrounding Sacramento (See Figure B-1).

Western has the following objectives for the Public Involvement process:

- **Share information with the interested public**—Western schedules workshops, scoping meetings, and hearings to share information with interested parties. Western also provides a variety of project information to the public in print and web-based formats. Western publishes milestones such as the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Draft EIS, Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIS and Final EIS, and the Record of Decision (ROD) in the FR.
- **Gather information from the public**—Western holds meetings throughout the formal scoping period to collect information from interested parties. Contacts with regulatory agencies, customers, and Native American tribes provided additional information about concerns. Western provides other opportunities



Source: California Division of Tourism, 2002

Figure B-1. Region of Influence

(such as workshops, a hotline, and a web site) for the public to participate throughout the proposed project review process.

- **Identify public concerns and values**—Western collects and analyzes public comments about the Proposed Action and alternatives throughout the Public Involvement process to use in the decision-making process. This analysis may, in some cases, result in changes to the project. Western is committed to working to identify and resolve these issues.
- **Develop and maintain credibility**—Western will be open with the public and address concerns in a straightforward manner.

B.1.2 STAKEHOLDERS AND INTERESTED PARTIES

For this Draft EIS, the public includes governmental agencies (Federal, state, and local entities), Native American tribes within the ROI, Western customers such as utility agencies and groups, residents within the ROI, and other parties interested in the Draft EIS and project alternatives.

B.1.2.1 GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Federal, state, and local governmental agencies and tribes Western contacted regarding the SVS EIS are listed in Chapter 5.

B.1.2.2 GENERATORS, UTILITY AGENCIES, AND GROUPS

Generators, utility agencies, and groups also have an interest in the Draft EIS. The following is a list of these groups:

- California Independent System Operator Corporation (ISO)
- Calpine Corporation (Calpine)
- FPL Energy (FPLE)
- Lodi Electric
- North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC)
- Northern California Power Agency (NCPA)
- Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E)
- River City Planning Group (RCPG)
- Roseville Electric
- Sacramento Area Transmission Planning Group (SATPG)
- Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD)
- Transmission Agency of Northern California (TANC)
- Western Interconnect Coordinating Forum (WICF)
- Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC)

B.1.3 WESTERN'S OUTREACH TO MINORITY AND LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES

Western identified minority and low-income populations within the ROI. To assure that these communities are reached, Western sends announcements of NEPA activities, such as workshops, hearings, and NOIs, to local media outlets such as the Sacramento Bee, Lodi, and Marysville/Yuba City newspapers.

B.2 COOPERATING AGENCIES

There are no cooperating agencies for this project.

B.3 COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION

Western consulted with the USFWS, NMFS, SHPO, and EPA on issues such as endangered species and historic preservation. These agencies provided Western with information and comments. Chapter 5 of the Draft EIS provides a comprehensive list of agencies and organizations.

B.4 COMMUNICATION METHODS AND TOOLS

Ongoing Outreach Efforts

- **Newsletter**—Western routinely mails the *SVS EIS News* to interested parties. The newsletter provides background information, project updates, and public meeting or workshop announcements. To date, Western has distributed issues of the *SVS EIS News* in March 2001, September 2001, April 2002, and October 2002.
- **Web Site**—The SVS EIS web site provides a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week method for the public to submit comments, add their name to the project's mailing list, and find out about the project's status. It includes information about the Draft EIS and provides links to other relevant web sites (www.wapa.gov).
- **Hotline**—Western offers a toll-free telephone hotline (877-913-4440) that provides the caller with current information about the proposed project and upcoming meetings, and an opportunity to have a project representative call back to answer specific questions.
- **Mailing List**—Western developed a comprehensive mailing list for the Draft EIS and uses it to notify interested parties of events and plans. It includes Western's customers, regional organizations, regulatory agencies, Native American tribes, and potentially affected landowners. Western maintains and updates the mailing list to encourage the greatest degree of public involvement. At each public meeting and workshop, audience members are asked to add their

names to the mailing list. Interested parties can also use the web site or hot line to be added to the mailing list.

Meetings and Workshops

- **Scoping Meeting**—Western held four scoping meetings in September 2000.
- **Workshops**—Western held workshops in March 2001 and September 2001. Both workshops explained alternative development and a synopsis of the Draft EIS.
- **Public Hearings**—Western will hold three public hearings in 2002, after publishing the Draft EIS, to hear comments on the proposal.

Notification and Comment Processes

- **Federal Register Notices**—Western publishes notices in the FR as required by NEPA and CEQ regulations (49 FR 49750) to announce comment periods, meetings, workshops, availability of documents, and to record decisions. The NOI was published in the FR on August 8, 2000 (65 FR 48496).
- **Comment Periods**—Western held a 60-day comment period during scoping. Western plans to hold three additional comments periods: a 45-day comment period after publishing the Draft EIS; a 30-day comment period after publishing the Final EIS; and a 30-day comment period after publication of the ROD.
- **News Releases**—Western prepares news releases announcing public meetings, workshops, and/or hearings and submits them to newspapers local to Sacramento, Lodi, and Marysville.

Other Resources

- **Project Contacts**—Western publicizes the names of the Environmental Project Manager and the Public Affairs Officer, with direct telephone numbers and e-mail addresses, to provide the public one-on-one contact with these individuals.
- **Scoping Comments**—Western summarized and analyzed comments received through the end of the scoping period. The results of the comments were characterized and presented in the SVS EIS News as well as used to formulate alternatives in the SVS EIS.
- **Briefing Packets**—Western prepared briefing packets for each scoping meeting with information that summarized the alternative categories, described Western's responsibilities, outlined the Draft EIS process and schedule, indicated public involvement opportunities and activities, and provided other relevant information.
- **Fact Sheets or Informational Flyers or Brochures**—Western distributes fact sheets, informational bro-

chures, and/or flyers at various public meetings and workshops.

- **Comment Forms and Interest Cards**—Western distributed comment forms with briefing packets at public scoping meetings and hearings. Western also distributed secondary information request postcards and clip out coupons in newsletters.

B.5 COMMENT ANALYSIS

Western requested comments from the public to identify issues to be addressed in the SVS EIS. Following is a summary of the comments.

- **Affected environment**—Request the SVS EIS document existing conditions, explaining the changes which have occurred (for instance, history of power generation and transmission and past impacts). Such an assessment is important in providing the historical and environmental context for current conditions and possible solutions for future voltage requirements for the Central Valley Project transmission system.
- **Air Quality**—Request the SVS EIS address air quality. Include a description of current and proposed activities and their impacts on air quality (including cumulative and indirect impacts); demonstrate compliance with conformity requirements of the Clean Air Act; examine the effects of increased reliance on fossil fuels during periods of reduced hydroelectric power generation (as could occur during droughts); and address the effect on energy and commercial projects in the area if powerplants have bought available emission credits.
- **Alternatives**—Evaluate a broad mix of alternatives, describing how each alternative was developed. Evaluate both generation and transmission. Alternatives should not adversely affect reliability. Alternatives should not affect autonomy. Consider near-term transmission solutions. Specific alternatives suggested include: demand-side management, distributed generation, potential upgrades to the existing transmission system, integration of the transmission grid in the greater Sacramento area, flexible AC transmission system design options, smarter use of electricity, obtaining power from outside California, new technologies, and use of backup emergency power during stage alerts. There were also numerous questions about whether Western already had specific projects in mind.
- **Biological Resources**—The SVS EIS should indicate what measures will be taken to protect critical fish and wildlife habitat areas from potential adverse effects of proposed management actions, and fully disclose potential beneficial and/or adverse impacts to

water quality, wetlands, and aquatic ecosystems. Also, the SVS EIS should fully evaluate proposed alternatives in the context of the potential for habitat restoration, habitat fragmentation, loss of connectivity and the cumulative effects on species viability. The SVS EIS should consider the Endangered Species Act when examining the impacts of potential projects.

- **Cultural Resources**—Request the analysis reflect concerns for cultural resources.
- **Document Preparation/Format**—If the SVS EIS uses references to previous documents, it should provide a summary of critical issues, assumptions and decisions complete enough to stand alone without depending upon continued reference to the other documents. The SVS EIS should also include a section on potential effects on local, state and Federal ordinances, regulations, legislation, and laws.
- **Environmental Justice**—The SVS EIS should describe the measures taken by Western to fully analyze the environmental effects of the proposed Federal action on minority communities, for example, Indian Tribes and low-income populations, and present opportunities for affected communities to provide input into the NEPA process.
- **Human Health**—Electrical system improvements should ensure human health and safety.
- **Methodologies**—Suggestions on how the analysis of SVS EIS alternatives should be conducted included: focusing on an evaluation of the environmental impacts of the proposal and alternatives in comparative form, thus defining the issues and providing a clear basis for choice among options for the decision maker and the public; describing the management constraints on the Federal projects which generate the power (for instance, flood control requirements, water supply contracts and diversion obligations, Endangered Species Act water flow requirements, and water quality standards requirements); full disclosure of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of all proposed actions; establishing a clear baseline to evaluate potential impacts; and determining compliance with the Federal Antidegradation Policy.
- **Public Involvement**—The SVS EIS should include a separate section describing specific actions and techniques that were used to ensure public participation and interagency collaboration and coordination.
- **Socioeconomics**—Lodi does not want financial impacts due to reliability; how will Western collect revenues necessary to recover the cost of project; and what actions can Western take to prevent rate increases.

- **Surface Water**—The SVS EIS should describe the potential impacts of any proposed actions on the operations of Bureau of Reclamation, Corps of Engineers, and International Boundary and Water Commission facilities (the primary project purpose for many of these facilities is water supply, flood control, and instream beneficial uses); address the potential implications of the proposed power and transmission actions on water supply, flood protection, and endangered species actions related to dams. Discuss specific monitoring programs that will be implemented before and after proposed management actions to determine potential impacts on water quality and beneficial uses. Identify impacts to water, floodplains, and wetlands. The proposed action should not violate state water quality standards, toxic effluent standards, or cause significant degradation of waters.

The comments helped Western narrow the alternatives and select the Proposed Action.

B.6 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STAGES

Public Involvement activities were integrated with the SVS EIS decision-making. Western identified communication objectives within four Public Involvement stages (Table B-1) to encourage on-going two-way communication throughout the process.

Specific opportunities for public involvement and input were scheduled to coincide with the public involvement stages. Table B-2 identifies these specific opportunities for public interaction, although Western remains in contact with the public throughout the project through less formal means.

With input from the public, agencies, and Western's customers during scoping and workshops, Western evaluated the alternatives and selected a Proposed Action, which is explained in the Draft EIS. Western will schedule public hearings to solicit comments on the Draft EIS. Western will carry forward the preferred alternative to the Final EIS and ROD.

B.7 MONITORING AND EVALUATING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

B.7.1 EVALUATION PARAMETERS

Western will periodically review the effectiveness of the PIP, until issuance of the ROD. Formal evaluations will be linked to the four stages of the EIS, defined as:

- Scoping
- Alternative formulation

Table B-1. Stages of Public Involvement During the Environmental Impact Statement Process

Stages	Objectives	Results and Products
Stage I: Scoping Introduce the project and obtain information from the public	1. Identify issues, alternatives, and areas of study for the SVS EIS process 2. Obtain complete understanding of how the proposal is viewed by all interested parties 3. Obtain public input on the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts Western has considered	1. Comprehensive mailing list 2. Comprehensive array of issues
Stage II: Alternatives Formulation Evaluate alternatives under consideration. The public has the opportunity to comment and assist in narrowing the selection and giving input to the Proposed Action.	1. Develop complete list of alternatives 2. Develop basic understanding of impacts of alternatives 3. Assess relative merit assigned to alternatives by various interests 4. Receive public comments 5. Select a Proposed Action	1. Narrowing of the Alternatives Considered 2. Identify a Proposed Action
Stage III: Impact Evaluation Identify and compares the impacts by resource area for each alternative.	1. Develop complete understanding of impacts of alternatives 2. Assess relative merit assigned to alternatives by various interests 3. Receive public comments 4. Assess impacts and select a Proposed Action	1. Draft EIS
Stage IV: Decision-making Select the Preferred Alternative	1. Make a decision selecting a preferred alternative, which is both technically feasible and politically acceptable	1. Final EIS and ROD documenting and supporting selected alternative published in the <i>Federal Register</i>

Source: Original 2001

SVS EIS: Sacramento Area Voltage Support Environmental Impact Statement

Draft EIS: Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Final EIS: Final Environmental Impact Statement

ROD: Record of Decision

Table B-2. Public Involvement Opportunities

Milestones	Tentative Time Frame
1. Scoping Meetings and Comment Period	September/October 2000
2. Workshop on Alternatives Selection	March 2001
3. Workshop on Project Status	September 2001
4. Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Comment Period	November 2002
5. Public Hearings	December 2002
6. Availability of Final Environmental Impact Statement	April 2003 (estimated)
7. Record of Decision (ROD)	May 2003 (estimated)

Source: Original 2001

- Impact evaluation
- Decision-making

Western will gather information at the beginning, intermediate, and final phase of each stage to determine how well the plan meets the established objectives and standards.

B.7.2 METHODOLOGY

To assess the Public Involvement process, Western's methodology, outlined below, establishes objectives, measurement criteria, and standards:

- **Objectives**—Expectations for each stage established to measure success.

- **Measures**—The basis for evaluating how well each objective has been met.
- **Standards**—The quantities that constitute adequate or good performance. If the “measure” is the number of people attending the scoping meeting, the “standard” is how many must attend for the meeting to be considered a success. Western has established standards for each stage.

B.7.3 ANALYSIS PROCESS

Western will gather data and informally evaluate the PIP throughout the EIS process. As part of the formal review, a checklist assists in assessing the effectiveness for each of the four stages. After evaluation, if an objective has not been met, Western will develop a plan to make improvements before the next stage.